

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 09522 260819Z

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 9522

EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, IR

SUBJ: SHAH COMMENTS ON FUTURE ROLE

1. DURING AUDIENCE LATE AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 25 FOR DEFREP IRAN MR. VON MARBOD AND GENERAL VANDENBERG, SHAH POINTED OUT THAT HIS COMMENT TO JOHN OAKES OF THE NEW YORK TIMES ABOUT STEPPING DOWN IN FAVOR OF HIS SON 12 YEARS FROM NOW WAS NO NEW IDEA. HE SAID HE HAD MADE THIS KNOWN FREQUENTLY IN THE PAST. HE FEELS THAT BY THE TIME THE CROWN PRINCE IS 28 YEARS OLD, TWO FIVE-YEAR PLANS WILL HAVE UNFOLDED AND WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN BRINGING IRAN TO THAT POINT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION FOR WHICH THE SHAH HAS BEEN AIMING. THE SHAH STATED THAT HIS FATHER HAD INTENDED TO ABDICATE IN HIS FAVOR IN A SIMILAR MANNER BUT THAT TIME HAD NOT PERMITTED THIS DUE TO THE PRESSURE FROM THE BRITISH AND THE RUSSIANS DURING WORLD WAR II.

2. WITH A SMILE, THE SHAH SAID THAT MR. OAKES HAD APPARENTLY BEEN NOTICEABLY PLEASED BY THE SHAH'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WOULD STEP DOWN. THE SHAH WENT ON, " I DO NOT KNOW WHAT MR. OAKES WAS SO PLEASED ABOUT. I INTEND TO CONTINUE IN THE BACKGROUND, EVEN AFTER I STEP DOWN, IN ORDER TO OBSERVE THE NEW KING'S POLICIES AND HOW HE CARRIES THEM OUT. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT GIVES RISE TO THE STORIES THAT I HAVE SOME FATAL ILLNESS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HAVE NEVER FELT BETTER." WHEN HE RETURNED FROM HIS SUMMER VACATION ON THE CASPIAN, HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS SLEEPING BETTER AND EATING BETTER THAN HE HAD IN YEARS.

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HELMS

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